

REMARKS

ON

Dr. *WELLS*

HIS

LETTER

TO A

Dissenting Parishioner.

In a Second Letter to a Friend.

The Second Edition.



L O N D O N,

Printed by *J. Humfreys*, for *John Lawrence*
at the Angel in the Poultry. 1707.



S I R,

WHEN I sent you my Remarks upon the Doctor's Letter to Mr. *Dowley*, I had not seen that to a dissenting Parishioner; but it has since come to my Hands; and I find upon the Perusal of it, that many things in it have received an Answer in my former, and so will the less need to be consider'd again in this. There are several things in this Letter of the Doctor's which I shall not take notice of, as being of no Moment in the present Controversy; his solemn Harangues, grave Admonitions, and insulting Triumphs, add nothing of Weight to his Arguments; and therefore when *these* have received an Answer, every one will discern *the other* do no hurt to our Cause. I intend likewise to be sparing in my Animadversions on his Reproaches, and the damning Sentences which he passes upon us, it being evident, we are not to stand or fall by his Judgment.

The first thing we are concern'd to take notice of, is what the Doctor undertakes to prove; *That we are all under an indispensable Obligation to follow the Rules and Directions of such as are duly Authoriz'd to govern that part of the Christian Church, which is within this Nation, and that in all things by them requir'd of us that are not Sinful*: To which purpose he urges *Heb. 13. 17. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, &c.* This, he says, is to be understood of Obedience, and Submission to *Spiritual Rulers*; which I grant: But then he adds, *That from this Text it appears, (1.) That in the Catholick or Universal Church, and consequently in (every distinct part thereof, that is) every National Church, there are some whose Office it is to rule; and therefore, among other things, to give Rules and Directions concerning all Circumstances relating to the Church, that are left undetermin'd by Christ and his Apostles.*

I have already consider'd the Text from which the Doctor argues in this Place; and,

1. I desire that it may be remember'd, (as it is there alledg'd) that our Obedience can be only due to things not sinfully commanded by Rulers.

2. I add, that the Doctor's Inference is not good, that because some are Rulers, therefore they have Power to determine all Circumstances relating to the Church, left undetermin'd by

Christ and his Apostles ; For they are only Rulers under Christ the supream Head and King of the Church ; and therefore the being Rulers, is very consistent with a much more restrain'd and limited Power, than what the Doctor assigns them.

Our Justices of the Peace are Rulers, and yet have not Power of determining all things undetermin'd by the Parliament : They can't bind Men where the Parliament has not done it before.

3. There may be many Circumstances which Christ design'd should always be left undetermin'd, and therefore the Doctor should produce that Commission whereby Christ has empower'd them to determine these things ; for I suppose no Man can doubt, but that he might set Rulers in his Church, tho' he has such a Design.

4. That it do's not appear, that Christ has left to the Rulers of his Church, any Power of determining other Circumstances than those that are in order to the Execution of his own Commands : They are Authoriz'd, and required to teach them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them, *Mat. 28. 20.* but no more that I can find ; and therefore those Circumstances which must be determin'd, or his Commands can be obey'd, they must determine. So the Circumstances of Time and Place must be determin'd, or the Command of Publick Worship can't be observ'd. And as to such Circumstances, there may be Reasons in different Times and Places, for different Determinations, which those on the Spot will be best able to judge of. And so the Wisdom and Goodness of our great Law-giver is manifest, in his leaving these things undetermin'd. But this do's not in the least establish their Power to appoint such things as are no way necessary or useful, in order to our observing what he has commanded, such as the Cross in Baptism, &c.

5. In those things, in which (tho' the Law of Christ has really left Men at Liberty) Christians may differ in their Apprehensions, Church-Rulers have not a Power to determine which side shall be taken. That this is a supposable Case, may appear by *Rom. 14.* And should all these things in dispute be really Lawful, yet since many judge them unlawful, and they are not any way necessary or useful, Church-Rulers have no Power to impose them, for this plain Reason, that this agrees not with the very end of their Power, which is for Edification and not for Destruction ; *2 Cor. 10. 8.* Now, this Power can be to Edification ; for in such things where God has left us our Liberty, we are not the better for doing 'em, nor the worse for not doing 'em ; *1 Cor. 8. 8.* It is to destruction ; as

is prejudicial to the Soul of a Christian, if he obeys while he is not satisfied of the Lawfulness of the thing enjoin'd; or as it is prejudicial to the Unity and Peace of the Church, while it necessitates the doubting Christian to separate, that he may not wound his Conscience.

6. When the Doctor says, That from Heb. 13. 17. it appears, that in the Catholick, and consequently in (every particular part thereof, that is) every National Church, there are some whose Office it is to rule. I must own I am at a loss to understand him: That it appears from thence, that in all those particular Churches, to which the Apostle wrote, there were Rulers, I grant, and that there should be such in all other Churches of the like Nature, is acknowledged likewise: But as the Apostle speaks not of the Catholick Church, I am not able to discern the Reason of his Consequence. One would think, that if the Text yields any Argument for the Doctor, it must be this; In all Particular Churches there are Rulers, and consequently there must be such in National Churches (and then if he has a mind to pleasure the Popish Usurpers, he may add) and consequently there must be such in the Catholick or Universal Church: The Catholick Church has no other governing Head but Christ; and he governs it; not by any Governour, or any Body or Assembly of Governours set over it as Catholick, but by Governours set over the several distinct Parts of which it is constituted.

The Question now comes to this; Into what kind of Parts is the Will of Christ that the Church Catholick should be divided? Or what Notion do's the Scripture give us of those Churches which had Rulers set over them? The Doctor says, that in every National Church there must be some whose Office it is to rule. But why should he not look upon himself concern'd to shew us the Institution of a National Church? I must declare, I find nothing of this Nature in the New Testament, where I meet with no other than these two sorts of Churches, the Catholick Church, and the Churches of one particular City or Place. The Christian Societies of a whole Country, are never spoken of as one Church, but as Churches, as the Churches in Judea, 1 Thes. 2. 14. The Churches of Macedonia, 2 Cor. 8. 1. The Churches of Asia, 1 Cor. 16. 19. The Churches of Galatia, 1 Cor. 16. 1. Gal. 1. 2. And there is not one Instance to the contrary in the New Testament; so that it is not fair for the Doctor to argue, that because there might be Rulers in those Churches which Christ has instituted, and we are obliged to submit to them, therefore Men may, when they have devis'd a new Species and kind of Churches, appoint Governours over them, and require us to

submit to them. That every distinct Church in those several Countries, had a full and compleat Power of Government within it self, I can't think will be deny'd; and this was a sacred Trust committed to them for their own Preservation, and other most valuable Purposes. And I humbly propose it to Consideration, whether it be reasonable to suppose, that they could of Right part with that Power they were originally intrusted with, and place it in the Hands of others? that is, Whether the Governours of the several Churches, for instance, of *Asia*, having receiv'd the Government from Christ over their respective Churches, could agree together to establish an higher Power over themselves? Or could lawfully submit to any Body of Men that claim'd it? If they had no right to this, I think the Commands of National Rulers will be of little Moment; for every Christian Church in a Nation, is to resume its own Right

This Power of the Rulers of a National Church, is that which often recurs in the Doctor's Letter, and indeed is the main Foundation upon which he builds. And therefore if I should leave off here, I should fully have answered the Doctor till he gives us proof of that which he now takes for granted concerning the Right of a National Church.

But let us hear his other Argument.

You know that St. Paul has given this general Rule in reference to Divine Worship, Let all things be done decently, and in order. 1 Cor. 14. 40. But no particular Rules relating to the several Circumstances of Decency and Order, are to be met with in the Scriptures: And therefore the Doctor argues, That either Christ was deficient in not leaving such Rules, or else he has provided for the same, by this Power lodg'd in Rulers.

To which I answer, That when the Doctor would take of the Objection from those Words, *Teaching for*

Pag. 14. *Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; he tells us from the Context, that Christ speaks only

against such Traditions or Commandments of Men, as do transgress the Commandments of God, and made the Commandments of God of none Effect. How truly he alledged this, will be consider'd in its proper Place: We only crave leave to imitate the Doctor, and to give our Answer from the Context, and the Scope of the Apostle. Now, in the place alledg'd, he argues against those things which carry'd in them an Indecency and Disorder, that was not owing to their being particularly forbid by Church-Rulers (for indeed this Indecency and Disorder, seems to have been wholly among the Church-Rulers themselves) but was obvious to all Men, according to the Natural Sentiments they have of Decency and Order.

der : And therefore the Apostle appeals here to their own Judgments *, and those of the Un-learned, and even of Unbelievers, *ver. 23.* If therefore the whole Church be come together, and all speak with Tongues, and there come in those that are unlearn'd, or Unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad? The Practice therefore which he speaks against, was so indecent and disorderly, that it was fit for none but Mad-men, and so could not be seemly in a Christian Assembly : And when such things as these, which are contrary to Mens Natural Notions of Decency and Order, are avoided, the Apostle's Precept will be observ'd. But from hence to infer the Power of Church-Rulers by their Commands, to create a Decency in those things that have none at all in themselves, is wide from the Purpose. The Apostle supposes the things decent, and therefore urges them ; and the Doctor argues from hence the Authority of Rulers to direct us when we are to kneel, stand, or bow ; whether there be any Decency in these things, or no.

'Tis extravagant, to think there is any Decency in standing at the reading of the same part of the Scripture, when read as a Gospel ; and sitting, when read as a Lesson ; or that there is any Decency in bowing at the Name of Jesus, toward an Altar, or the East. And if there be nothing of a natural Decency in these things, the Doctor cannot argue from this Text the Power of Rulers to impose them.

Again by the same sort of Argument, 'twill follow, That the Rulers of the Church have full Power to make, and appoint all such Officers (even over and above those mention'd by Christ and his Apostles) as they shall judge convenient for the well governing of the Church, and consequently to make Arch-Bishops, Arch-Deacons, Chancellors, Officials, Apparitors, &c.

What has been already said, serves for a sufficient Answer to this. Christ has appointed Rulers in his Church ; he has given them a Power to take care of the Execution of his Laws : And he has made it their Duty to use this Power, and they have no Right to abridge themselves of it, as they really do, when they subject themselves to such Officers as he has not appointed, or commit that Power to others, which, according to his Appointment, was at first peculiar to themselves : And if the Doctor's Notion be true, the Form of Church-Government must be the most mutable Creature in the World.

According to the Doctor's way of arguing, if National Churches may create a new sort of Officers (Arch-Bishops) why may not the Arch-Bishops of several Nations agree to make Patriarchs? and all the Patriarchs make a Pope? Or at least

the Doctor bids fair for the setting up of an English National Pope, according to what some suspected to be the Design of a certain Prelate, who refused a Cardinal's Cap.

And what can be more absurd, than to dispute, whether Presbyters (Officers of Divine Appointment) have the Government of the Church committed to them, and yet make Chancellors (a Parcel of meer Lay-men) Judges in Spiritual Courts, of the most important Concerns, as Excommunications, &c.

2. The Doctor says, *It appears from Heb. 13. 17. That all other Christians are bound in Conscience to obey and submit to the said Rulers of the Church.*

I answer in the Doctor's own Words, *That as far as the Power of the Ruler doth extend on the one hand, so far on the other side is to be extended the Obedience of those under Rule*; that is, A Christian is bound to obey those whom God has set over him so long as they act according to their Commission; but when they go beyond that, they become Tyrannical, and he is at his Liberty.

But the Doctor argues, *That there is no Limitation annex'd whereby the Obedience required should be restrain'd to such Matters as are determin'd by Christ and his Apostles.*

I answer, There is no Limitation annex'd when we are required to obey Magistrates, *Tit. 3. 1.* And yet this Nation is very sensible, that such may go beyond the Power that is committed to them, and that then Subjects are not bound to obey.

Or again, it is very possible that Civil Rulers may command one thing, and Church Rulers another; as, for ought I see is actually the Case as to the whole Body of the Canons of 1640 and of many of those of 1603. Or again, the like Obedience is urg'd upon Children to their Parents, *Ephes. 6. 1.* and upon Servants to their Masters, *ver. 5.* And these must be supposed not to interfere with one another: And therefore 'tis plain we must here distinguish the Nature of the several Powers; and in the particular Case before us, must judge what the Obedience is that we are to yield to the Rulers of the Church by the Commission and Authority they have receiv'd from Christ; and what that is I have observ'd already. But farther the Text it self do's contain a Limitation in the Reason that is given, *for they watch for your Souls*: And therefore so long only as they watch for the Good of my Soul, and in those things wherein they do so, I am to submit to them, and obey them; but when they enjoyn things that can't possibly do my Soul any Good, as the Cross in Baptism, bowing toward an Altar, &c. They herein watch for themselves, and the setting up of the

own Authority; and watch not for my Soul, except to make a Prey of it; and therefore herein the Apostle do's not require me to obey them.

But (says the Doctor) *no Christian can be reasonably suppos'd to scruple giving Obedience to what is expressly commanded by Christ and his Apostles; and therefore if the Obedience requir'd, is to be understood to extend no farther than to what is expressly commanded in the Scriptures, then there seems to be no occasion left for the inspir'd Writer to give any such Precept.*

To which I might answer, that some things not determin'd, or expressly commanded by Christ, were yet necessary to be determin'd, in order to the obeying his express Commands; and in such things they were to obey their Rulers. But passing that, I would fain have the Doctor make good his Assertion; for I fear it will be found at last, that in all Ages of the Church, there have been many Christians (*i. e.* many who profess'd themselves such, and were in visible Communion with the Church) who scrupled giving Obedience to the express Laws of Christ, and (to use some of the Doctor's words) *The Inspir'd Writer foreseeing that in after-ages, (and indeed finding it too true in his own) some might arise, who, not so much out of Humour as out of Perverseness, and desperate Wickedness, might be Drunkards, Whoremongers, Liars, Cheats, &c. (tho these things were directly opposite to the express Laws of Christ) he urges them to be subject to their Rulers, for this Reason, because they in their publick and private Exhortations, and by the Discipline appointed by Christ, were to urge and inculcate the avoiding these things, and to press upon them the contrary Vertues. I am sure, the Doctor's Representation will not fit any Age of the Church; no not that in the Times of the Apostles, as may be seen by the Church of Corinth. of whole Disorders we read: And by the Asian Churches, Rev. 2, & 3. And the Hebrew Christians (to whom this Epistle was written) were exceeding prone to depart from Christ, and his holy Religion, from the great Affection which they retain'd to Judaism: And hence he continually exhorts them to Stedfastness in the Christian Religion; and upon this very account urges them to regard their Rulers in this Chapter, ver. 7, 8. Nay, that the Obedience to Church-Rulers, requir'd in the afore-said Text, is to be understood principally and chiefly in reference to things determin'd only by their Authority, may be farther argu'd from Propriety of Speech. And this will appear from the Distinction made use of by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 7. For ver. 10. where he delivers what was by our Saviour himself enjoin'd to marry'd Persons, having at first said, Unto the Marry'd I command; he presently recalls himself, as having spoken less accurately, and subjoyns, Yet not*

I, (that is, in strict Propriety of Speech, not I) but the Lord. And in like manner, ver. 12. he says, But to the rest speak I (that is more properly I) not the Lord, viz. By any express Command or Determination in Scripture. Now, according to this Distinction, to observe or do what is expressly commanded in Scripture, is to obey God himself, and not (properly) the Rulers of the Church; and then only we can be said (properly) to obey the Church-Rulers themselves, when we observe or do somewhat commanded by them, tho' it be not commanded in the Scripture.

I do not much dislike the Doctor's Interpretation of the Text, when the Apostle says, *Yet not I, but the Lord*; that he means, that Christ himself had by his own Word, while on Earth, decided the case; and that therefore what he was speaking of, was rather to be look'd upon as the Command of Christ *immediately*, and not *mediately* by his Apostles. But then when he says, *To the rest speak I, not the Lord*; the meaning only is, that Christ had said nothing of that Matter while on Earth. Nor is the Apostle to be understood, as tho' he did not give this Command by Inspiration, or as tho' this were not to be consider'd as *properly* the Command of Christ. To which purpose the Reader may consult Dr. *Whitby's* Preface to his Annotations, who has excellently well clear'd this Matter. And what is now all our Doctor's Harangue to the purpose? St. *Paul* distinguishes what Christ had said while on Earth, from what he himself wrote by the immediate Direction and Inspiration of his Spirit.

Does the Doctor think this will help him in his Argument, to prove the Power of Church-Rulers, who have no such Inspiration? Or would he persuade us, that to obey the Commands which Christ gave by the infallible Direction of his Spirit, is not properly to obey Christ? I will indeed own, that to obey Church-Rulers, when they command what Christ does no ways command, is not properly to obey Christ: And add farther, that till they can give us good Evidence of that Inspiration the Apostles had, I cannot look upon my self oblig'd by the Commands they are pleas'd to enact. It is certain, where the Apostles had no Rule themselves, they pretended not to give any. The things enjoyn'd at the Council of *Jerusalem*, were necessary things, which it seem'd good to the Holy Ghost, and to the Apostles, to lay upon Christians; *Acts* 15. 28. In other things they left Christians to their Liberty, *Rom.* 14. And if the Apostles themselves claim'd not a Power of determining such Matters, I cannot but question the Right of all Church-Rulers who come after them.

I shall take notice of his other Consideration that follows here,

here, when I come to consider the 8th Objection which he speaks to; and therefore now pass on his 2d General Head, which is, as he tells us;

II. *To prove that the Governours of that Part of the Christian Church, which is within this Kingdom, are (so far as concerns the Controversy between us and you) those we now a-days call Bishops.*

The Doctor is larger on this Head in his other Letter; and having consider'd that already, I refer the Reader to my other Letter: I shall only add;

1. That the Doctor has here left out the Lower House of Convocation, who are all Presbyters; and yet they in each Province concur to the making of Canons; and therefore one wou'd think, should be part of the Spiritual Legislature, or of the Government of the National Church. And he has left out the Prince, without whose Approbation their Canon signifies nothing. He has left out the Parliament, who have a Power to disannul any of their Canons, or to make what Alterations they please in the National Church. And indeed it is hard to say, who are the Governours of our National Church: For the Bishops can't in any respect be look'd upon as more than a part of the Spiritual Legislature: And as we pretend that Ministers should be under Christ, just such are they in their several Diocesses under the Convocation, bound by their Commands, and oblig'd to see to the Execution of them, so far as the Civil Government will permit them.

2. As it is unreasonable for Men to alter the very Species of Churches from the first Institution, so it is unreasonable to pretend, that Men come to have a Right to rule the Church in any other way, than what Christ has appointed; and I fear it will be hard to find where he has intrusted the Civil Magistrate with the Power to chuse the Governours of his Church.

The Doctor then tells his Parishioner, *that he has somewhat experienc'd, that after the greatest Evidence that can be desir'd from Antiquity in this Case, there is at last an Evasion ready to be made use of by him, that he is not Scholar enough to enter into the Merits of the Controversy.*

But in my Apprehension, no great matter of Scholarship is requisite in this Case. Every Christian's Religion should be in his Bible; and he need not much regard those that argue from any other kind of Testimony. Now I don't think it so hard a matter for Men to understand, whether according to the Scripture there were Bishops appointed over Presbyters. And when I consider that this Obedience to Bishops is that which the Doctor requires under pain of Damnation, and would persuade us that the believing every thing Reveal'd in the Scriptures,

tures, and obeying all the Commands of Christ, will not save a Man, who do's not obey the Bishops, I cannot but think, that the fullest and clearest Evidence is to be given us from the Scriptures, that this is our Duty, and that the necessity of such Obedience should be shewn as clearly and positively express'd, as is the Necessity of Faith and Holiness. But the Doctor himself sufficiently declares, that this is not the State of the Case; when he tells us, *that the Order of Apostles was distinct from the Order of Presbyters, and the same with what we now call the Order of Bishops, is fairly to be gathered from the New Testament it self, and is evident beyond all Contradiction from the Writings of the Primitive Christians.* Now this should be evident beyond all Contradiction, from the New Testament it self, if it were an Article of Faith necessary to be believed in order to Salvation. I have already sufficiently answer'd what he here asserts, and to his *Ignatius*, I oppose *Clemens*, and *Polycarp*, as ancient Witnesses, who give a plain Testimony of the two-fold Order; and add, that we oppose not the Episcopacy mention'd by *Ignatius* himself.

But let us see how the Doctor answers in this Case. He asks him, *What is the Consequence of this? Is it not that you ought, in all such Cases too difficult for your self to determine, to betake your self to him, who is appointed by God to be your immediate Guide in all Religious Matters, that is, to your Parish-Minister?* And that the Parish-Ministers are thus appointed by God, he labours to prove by this Reason, because they are appointed by the Bishops, the Governours of the National Church.

Now in answer to this, 1. I desire the Reader to observe what he means by betaking himself to his Parish-Minister, that is, that he is not only to consult him, but to submit his own Judgment to his, as I think is plainly the Doctor's Scheme in many Places. Now this is what the Papists would fain urge People to, but is a Principle very contrary to the main Foundation of Protestants, and the Rule of the Apostle, *Prove all things.* And the Papists are willing to put the matter on the same Foot, of Cases too difficult for the Laity. But we deny, that any thing necessary to Salvation is too hard and difficult for such to determine.

2. I deny, for many Reasons already mention'd, that the Bishops have the Power pretended.

3. The Appointment of a Bishop is only a matter of Form, he having no Right to refuse the Presentation of a Patron, who can have no Right, by the Laws of Christ, to chuse a Guide for the Souls of the whole Parish.

4. The appointment of a Bishop is often not necessary,
as

as in many Places, which are exempted from Episcopal Jurisdiction.

Whence you may learn, that in respect to the Church, 'tis no more left to your own Will or Choice, whom you will look upon as your true Pastor or Minister, than in respect to the State 'tis left to your own Will or Choice, whom you look upon as your Constable, &c. but as he that is duly appointed by the Civil Magistrate to be the Constable of your Parish, is to be acknowledg'd as your Constable; so he that is duly appointed by the proper spiritual Magistrate to be the Minister of your Parish, is to be acknowledg'd on all accounts as your Minister or Pastor, and as such is to be your Guide in spiritual Matters.

Not to repeat what is said before, I answer, that the Doctor's Parallel will not be much amiss when rightly put, that is thus; As he that is chosen by the Parish, according to the fixed Laws of the Land, to be Constable, is to be look'd upon as a Constable of the Parish; so he that is chosen by the Church, according to the Laws of Christ, to be the Minister of it, is to be look'd upon as the true Minister of the Church.

As to what follows, it is only silly wheedling (not unusual in the Doctor's way of writing) that will suit any Climate, Protestant or Popish. The Case is not so difficult, but that any ordinary Understanding, upon Impartial Consideration, may judge of it. I will be so free as to say, that the Presentation of a Patron, or the Institution and Induction of a Bishop, have not as yet been prov'd to be full Evidences of a Divine Appointment of a Man to be the Minister of a Parish. And he that is of my Mind, and is for choosing another to be the Guide of his Soul, acts, for ought I can see, very warrantably. And tho' the Errors of a Minister will not justify the Errors of the People, and the Doctor is mistaken, when he says the Error is not *properly* the Peoples, but the Ministers, when he leads them into it, for it is *properly* the Error of both, because both are in the wrong, and both ought to search the Scriptures, and the People are not to rely upon any Minister's Authority for the Truth of what he says; yet I shall always entertain such Notions of God's Mercy, as to think he will pardon the involuntary Errors of all sincere and humble Souls, who search the Scriptures for Information, and act according to the best Light they can get from thence, in Matters that relate to their spiritual Benefit; and by this Rule I judge indifferently of Church-men and Dissenters.

III. His third general Head is, *That nothing sinful is requir'd of you by the Bishops, and therefore that there can be no warrantable Excuse or Argument for your Refusing to observe the Rules of the Church.*

Of Set Forms of Prayer : I have spoken largely in my other Letter, and so pass them over here.

IV. Next the Doctor proceeds to answer our Objections.

1. The first Objection is taken from *Mat. 15. 9.* *But in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* Now this Text (says he) is generally urg'd by your Writers, against observing the Rules and Orders of our Church, as being the Commandments of Men, (or in the common Language) *Humane Ordinances.* How we argue from this Text, may be seen in my other Letter ; and I think the Doctor has said very little in this Place to take off the Force of the Objection.

But (says he) with how little Reason this Text is wrested by your Party, against the Rulers of our Church, will quickly appear : For if you consult the former part of the Chapter, you will find, that our Saviour is therein speaking only against such Traditions or Commandments of Men, as did transgress the Commandments of God, ver. 3. and make the Commandments of God of none Effect, ver. 6.

The Case is plainly this ; The Scribes and Pharisees blame Christ's Disciples for transgressing the Tradition of the Elders, by eating with unwashten Hands. There are two Parts of our Lord's Answer to this Accusation. (1.) The Accusation is retorted, and a much greater Charge is brought by him against them, for transgressing God's Commandments by their Traditions ; and their hainous Wickedness, and notorious Hypocrisy, was evidenc'd by their Concern about such a Trifling Tradition, while they so directly oppos'd the Commandment of God, and rendred it of none Effect. What this Commandment of God which is meant, was, may be seen by the Words of the Evangelist ; But he answer'd, and said to them, *Why do you also transgress the Commandment of God by your Tradition ? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy Father and thy Mother ; and he that curseth Father or Mother, let him die the Death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his Father, or Mother, 'tis a Gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his Father, or his Mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the Commandment of God of none Effect through your Tradition.* (2.) The other Part of our Lord's Answer, is a proper Vindication of his Disciples, in which, he tells the Pharisees, that those Rules they gave about washing Hands, &c. and upon which they so much insisted, were not pleasing to God, and so were not binding : And to this part of his Answer belong those Words ; *But in vain do they worship, &c.* and this is evident, by comparing *Matthew* and *Mark*, who both of them distinguish these two Parts of our Lord's Answer, which being so distinct and different, they do not observe the same Order in recording them. But *St. Matthew*

Mark has set down this latter first, which is set down last by *St. Matthew*; and therefore I desire the Reader to observe how the Words run in *Mark*, immediately upon the Charge, *Mark* 7. 6. *He answer'd and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you, Hypocrites, as it is written, This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me, howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* Now here is no mention made of their rendring the 5th Commandment of none Effect, through their Traditions, that follows after; and therefore it is idle to think, that our Lord spoke only of such Traditions as were directly opposite to express Commands. The next Words shew, what sort of Commandments of Men our Lord speaks against; *For laying aside the Commandment of God, ye hold the Tradition of Men, as the washing of Pots and Cups, &c.* So that if the Doctor would really say any thing to the Purpose, he should set us down some express Command of God in the Scripture, which was contradicted by their Tradition, concerning the washing of Hands, Pots, Cups, &c.

Again, Christ rebukes the Jews for teaching such their Traditions for Doctrines; that is, making them of equal Obligation and Necessity with the Commandments of God.

I am very sensible what Stress the *Jews* laid upon their own Traditions; but the Question is now only, Whether that Matter be intended in the Text? And whether the Doctor has given us a good Gloss upon those Words, *Teaching for Doctrines?* But unless his Word may pass for a clear Proof, I can see no Reason for this Interpretation. In my Apprehension, there is very good Sense in our Lord's Discourse, if it be thus understood; "The Doctrines, the Rules, and Directions, which you give for the worshipping and honouring God, are the meer Commandments of Men; they are such things as God has no where prescrib'd, and which therefore do not please him, but are vain and unprofitable. And let the Reader consider, whether this do's not exactly agree with the Sense of the Prophet, from whom our Lord cites this Passage, *Isa. 29. 13. And your Fear towards me, is taught by the Precept of Men.* So that if the Doctor thinks God is serv'd and honour'd by these humane Ordinances in Dispute, I can't see but that (however arbitrary and uncharitable he is towards the Dissenters) he is in perfect Charity, and at a full Agreement with the judicious and learned *Scribes and Pharisees.*

The Doctor gives us a good Hint of an Objection; *Viz. If these Things are not of equal Obligation and Necessity with the Commands of God, Why are they so much insisted upon, and why are they not alter'd, and taken away, that so the Dissenters may join Commu-*

nion with us? The Doctor answers, That *the Rulers of our Church are spiritual Fathers, and the Dissenters are so many untoward Children, that refuse due Obedience, without any good Ground.* And therefore he thinks, the Children (and not the Fathers) should comply. In answer to which learned Comparison, I say, there may be *untoward Fathers*, as well as *Children*. And if Children are arriv'd to the full Use of their own Understanding, (the want of which, is the great Reason why they are to be guided by that of their Parents, during their Minority) they are oblig'd to consider of the Reason and Justice of the Commands of a Parent: And when they see he goes beyond his Power in commanding, and question the Lawfulness of the thing commanded, they are not to obey. And to use the Doctor's Comparison, If a Father enjoyns a thing, which he owns to be needless, and the Child professes that he judges it sinful, and therefore desires to be left to his Liberty, he would be an untoward Father with a witness, in the Judgment of all the World, who nevertheless persisted in commanding it.

But the Doctor tells us, *This is a meer Sham or Pretence: For, (says he) I desire to know what Dissenters will be gain'd to the Church by this Method alone? We must take away, not only Ceremonies, but also the Sacraments, before the Quaker will join with us. — Infant-Baptism, before the Anabaptist will joyn with us. — Your whole Order of Bishops, before the Presbyterian and Independent will joyn with us.*

As to any Institutions of Christ, they are not to be taken away: And therefore no Body expects the Quakers should joyn with the Church of *England*, or any other set of Christians while they continue Quakers. Nor is Infant-Baptism to be taken away to gain the Anabaptists: Tho' I own their Opinion alone would not hinder me from holding Communion with them; But as to the other two, I can't think their joyning impossible. If Churches were reduc'd to their Primitive Size, and Subscriptions in dubious Matters were not requir'd, and pretended indifferent Matters were left indifferent, and Presbyterians were allowed their due Share in the Government of the Church, our Difference wou'd not long remain any thing near so wide as it is at present. I wonder whether the Doctor thinks King *Charles* the 2d's Declaracion took away the whole Order of Bishops? Or whether he do's not know that the Presbyterians were thankful for it? If the thing it self be so Impracticable, why did the Bishops declare it to King *James* the 2d, that they were ready to come to a Temper with reference to the Dissenters? Or why did the Church-men promise this to the Dissenters in the time of their Distress? Or why did so many famous Church-men draw up Alterations for this end in the *Jerusalem Chamber*? Upon this I can't but take Notice of what

Mr. Calamy says, That "such Amendments as those were, with such an Allowance in the Point of Orders for Ordination by Presbyters, as is made 13 *Eliz. Cap. 12.* would in all Probability have brought in two Thirds of the Dissenters in England.

Abridgment,
P. 655.

Obj. 2. Is from *Col. 2. 18, & 23.* from whence you are wont to infer, that 'tis unlawful to comply with the Rites and Ceremonies of our Church, because they are so many Acts or Circumstances of Will-worship.

The Dissenters do indeed think, that the Will of God is the Rule of Worship; and that such Worship as is not according to the Declaration he has given us of his Will, may well be call'd *Will-worship*, and is not pleasing to God. And they own they can't find any thing in the Scriptures to satisfy them, that God requires us to worship him with such Ceremonies as Bowing at the Name of Jesus toward an Altar; or with the Cross in Baptism, and the like. And this their Opinion is not only grounded on the word *Will-worship*, but on other Texts of Scripture, as has been shewn already. It is true, they imagine, they have a very good Argument from this Text, and I universally think the Doctor has said but little in answer to it. He cites too Verses as the Ground of the Objection, and takes Notice only of one, and that not the Chief, where the word *Will-worship* is. He says, that the voluntary Humility or Worshipping there spoken against, is that which was paid by some of the ancient Hereticks to Angels, as is plain from the express Words of the Text, *Let no Man beguile you of your Reward in a voluntary Humility, and Worshipping of Angels.*

I suppose by these *Ancient Hereticks*, the Doctor means the Gnosticks: But I hardly believe it can be made appear, that the Apostle has any Regard to them here. I can't but think he refers rather to some corrupt Doctrines of the Jews, or Jewish Christians; to which Purpose I only desire the Context may be observ'd, both which goes before, and which follows after. I am sure *St. Jerom* is of this Mind.

I can't certainly say, what is then meant by the *Κηρυγμα των αγγέλων*, the Worship or Religion of Angels; but if the Angels are here spoken of, not as the Objects, but as the Authors of the

Worship, † *Tertullian's* Interpretation will not be the less, when he says, that the Apostle here speaks against those, "Who from Angelical Visions pre-

tended they must abstain from Meats. With whom also agrees a Commentator, to be met with among *St. Jerom's* Works. Perhaps this may well agree with those

whom *Dr. Lightfoot* * speaks of, as frequent in the Jewish Writings about their *Barb, Kol*, and

* *Vide Epist. ad Algasiam, tom. 3. p. m. 112.*

† *Adv. Marc. lib. 5. p. 614.*

* *Vol. 2. p. 129.*

the Appearance of *Elias* to their Wise-men; and it may be from some such kind of Opinion, that the *Pharisees* chuse to express themselves so, *Acts* 23. 9. *But if a Spirit or an Angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.* I determine nothing, but refer it to the Consideration of better Judgments: Only I observe, if this be the true Sense of the Text, it bears a little hard upon *Socrates's* Story of the Original of Cathedral Worship, who tells us, that it arose from *Ignatius*, seeing a Vision of Angels singing Hymns to God in that alternate manner; with whom agrees *Nicephorus Callistus*. * Nor do's it much favour those, who alledge *Constantine's* Vision of the Cross, in Defence of the Cross in Baptism. But let the Doctor be allow'd to have giv'n us a true Interpretation of the 18th Verse, and let us see whether in the other Verse which he cites in the Objection, but omits in the Answer, there be nothing that deserv'd his Notice. I shall set down the Text at large, *ver.* 20, &c. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the Rudiments of the World, why, as though living in the World, are ye subject to Ordinances (Touch not, tast not, handle not, which all are to perish in the using) after the Doctrines and Commandments of Men? Which things have indeed a shew of Wisdom in Will-worship and Humility, and neglecting of the Body, not in any Honour to the satisfying of the Flesh.* In which Words the Apostle argues, that Christians should not be subject to such Rules and Precepts as those, *Touch not, Tast not, Handle not*; which were certainly things indifferent in themselves. These Rules he calls Ordinances, after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men, where we have the two Words which are us'd, *Matt.* 15. 9. and indeed Christ's Defence of his Disciples there, is turn'd into a Prohibition (or what is equivalent) here. And as Christ shews, that his Disciples were not bound by the Laws of Men urg'd by the Scribes and Pharisees, so *St. Paul* shews, that Christians should not obey any such Laws of Men. And this he argues from their being deliver'd from the Ceremonial Yoke by Christ: The Rudiments of the World are certainly the Jewish Ceremonies; compare *Gal.* 4. 3, 9. & *Heb.* 9. 1. And if the Ceremonies, whose Original was of God, are spoken of with Contempt here and else-where, when God no longer requir'd the use of them; I can't think that those, whose Original is purely of Men, are like to be pleasing to him. Nor can I apprehend, that he who has taken away one Ceremonial Yoke, has Authoriz'd un-inspir'd Men to lay another upon the Necks of his Disciples. Again, the Apostle says these things have a shew of Wisdom in Will-worship. I must own, the Inter-

preter

preters differ about the word Will-worship, whether it is to be taken in a good or a bad Sense. Some think 'tis to be understood in a good Sense, and that Will-worship signifies the Forwardness and Freeness of their Service ; and so they think by a shew of this, and of Humility, they Endeavour'd to set off themselves, and to gain Profelytes. Others think it is to be taken in a bad Sense, and that such Worship as is not of Divine Institution, is condemn'd under this Name. And by the way, the chief Objection against this Interpretation, viz. That it is joyn'd with Humility, is easily remov'd, if St. Jerom's Interpretation of Humility, in a bad Sense, be allow'd, with whom Tertullian seems to agree, in the places mention'd before. But I need not concern my self to determine in which Sense 'tis to be understood ; for in either of them it must have a Reference to those Humane Ordinances spoken of before ; and if it be understood in a bad Sense, 'tis then plain, that the Apostle condemns those Humane Ordinances under the Name of Will-worship : But if it be taken in a good Sense, he then must be suppos'd to reckon these things to have only a plausible shew of some-what Good, while they were really Bad : And then, tho' the word Will-worship will not support the Objection, yet the Scope of the Apostle and his Argument will sufficiently do it.

The Doctor pretends, That *here is no Danger of being guilty of Will-worship, because we act out of bounden Duty to our Rulers, and not of our own Will and Choice.* But this is nothing to the purpose, because the Apostle forbids a Subjection to such Ordinances.

I shall only subjoyn, that we are not the only Persons who object against Will-worship. Bp. Usher tells us, that in the second Commandment is forbidden *Body of Divinity*, p. 222.
 " Every Form of Worship, tho' of the True
 " God (*Deut.* 12. 31.) contrary to, or diverse
 " from the Prescript of God's Word, (*Mat.* 15. 9.) call'd by
 " the Apostle Will-worship. (*Coloss.* 2. 23.) †
 " All Will-worship, whereby we make any thing † P. 228.
 " a part of God's Service, which he hath not
 " commanded, *Col.* 2. 23. For how great a shew soever it
 " have, yet in that it leaneth to Man's Wisdom, 'tis unlawful.
 " In particular, — To devise any other Ministry than that
 " which God hath Ordain'd, to place Religion in Meat and
 " Drink, Apparel, Time, Place, or any other indifferent Thing.

His 3d and 4th Objections are consider'd in my former Letter.
 His 5th Objection against Bishops being call'd Lords Bishops, is what for ought I can find Dissenters rarely alledge, and perhaps never ground it upon the Text cited by the Doctor, 1 Pet.

5. 3. or at least that is not the Principal Text they insist on in that Matter.

The Question is, whether those Titles of Honour, and that Interest the Bishops have in Civil Affairs, do's so well suit with their Character and Work, as to deserve to be made inseparable from it. 'Tis very possible, that many Dissenters have thought they do not, as well as many others, and the Doctor is not Ignorant, that there are several Ancient Ecclesiastical Canons that favour this Opinion: But I will own to him, that whoever grounds an Objection against the Bishop's Titles upon this Text, do's not argue very strongly; it being thus in the *Greek*, not *Lording* or *Domineering* over God's Heritage, that is, not pretending to Rule in an Arbitrary way, and setting up their own Will for a Law, and expecting that People should yield a blind Obedience to all their Decrees, and then the Doctor will do well to consider whether his Arguments do not, in a great Measure, oppose the Prohibition of the Apostle.

6. I have consider'd the Business of his 6th Objection in my former Letter.

Objection 7th; *Proceed we next to the Text urg'd by you for Liberty of Conscience in Religious Matters, to wit, Gal. 5. 1. Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ has made us free?*

Liberty of Conscience (in the common use of that Expression) is hardly argued by any one from that Text. Liberty of Conscience, as it signifies Liberty for a Man to follow the Dictates and Directions of his Conscience in the Worship of God, is not meant by the Liberty there spoken of. This Liberty is founded upon the Law of Nature, and is one of the unalienable Rights of every Good Subject, which no Government can justly deprive him of: But if by Liberty of Conscience, the Doctor means only that the Conscience is freed from some Law, (*viz.* the Ceremonial) by which it was oblig'd before; so we confess we do argue from this Text: And we own, this Liberty do's not signify a *Freedom to do what we will in Religious Matters*; We own our selves under Law to Christ: We allow the Doctor, that it relates to the Yoke of the Levitical Law, but then our not being oblig'd by the Levitical Ceremonial Law, is reckon'd by the Apostle a Liberty, and a Privilege, tho' that Law was of God's own making; and I hope then it will be no great Instance of our Liberty, to come under another Ceremonial Yoke of Man's making. If these Old Religious Ceremonies, which God himself Instituted, are stiled a Yoke of Bondage, and beggarly Elements, I confess, I can't have very Honourable Thoughts of those new ones which are of an infinitely less honourable Extract.

As to the other Text brought in here by the Doctor, *1 Thess.*
21. Prove all things. I know none that think it gives leave to
try and experiment all things. We say, it requires that Christians
 should examine the things they hear, and search by the Scrip-
 tures, whether they be true or no; and not act by an implicit
 Faith in any one who pretends to be their Guide: And we say
 farther, that the last part of the Verse, *hold fast that which is*
good; obliges them not to entertain his Errors, but only those
 Truths which he delivers; of which I shall say more under the
 next Head.

Obj. 8th, Rom. 14. 23. Whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin: Whence
(says the Doctor) you may perhaps argue, that it being not of Faith
in you, that is, it being contrary to your Perswasion or Judgment, to
join Communion with us; It would therefore be a Sin in you to do it,
and consequently for that Reason (if for no other) you ought to abstain
from our Communion. Now I desire you, Neighbour, to consider, that
if this Text is so to be understood, as you would have it, viz. That a
ny Man's private Perswasion (how groundless soever) of a things be-
ing sinful, do's entirely excuse him from doing the thing; then by this
Text a Papist, nay a Jew, nay a very Heathen, may justifie his man-
ner of Worship, as well as you justifie yours by the Separation.

I wonder how the Doctor could fasten such a Sense as this up-
 on the Dissenters: There are none of them who understand
 this Text as he says. We own that Conscience is it self under
 Law, and that an erroneous Conscience, when it puts a Man
 upon omitting a Duty as no Duty, is far from intirely justifying
 him: He sins in not doing what God has commanded, and in not
 informing his Conscience better; but yet should he perform a
 Duty, his Conscience (through mistake) telling him it is a Sin,
 he would sin too. And it is not peculiar to the Dissenters to hold
 that Conscience is every Man's immediate Guide, which he is
 always, and in all things to follow. What that dictates to be
 his Duty, he is to do, and what that dictates to be Sin, he is
 not to do. And as the Dissenters profess their Perswasion and
 Judgment in these things is wholly grounded upon the Holy
 Scriptures, the Doctor might have omitted this Objection; for
 when he can convince them, that this Perswasion is groundless,
 he will find they will make no such use of the Text. In the mean
 time, (for I think his Arguments do not abound with Evidence
 and Strength) while the Perswasion lasts, they can't but look
 upon themselves bound, by this Text, to follow it. And who is
 there that doubts whether a Papist, &c. do's sin, that changes
 his Religion, while his erroneous Conscience tells him he should
 not. The Doctor indeed says, that *these words were spoken with*
reference to such Particulars, as were not determin'd either by the
Scriptures or the Governours of the Church, but were left to every
one's

one's private Determination. But this is a mistake, for St. Paul speaks of the eating those things which some esteem'd (tho without sufficient Reason) unclean and unlawful to be eaten and this Particular was determin'd, as he declares, *ver. 14. I know and am perswaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of it self.* What fuller Determination would the Doctor have? And yet he declares, that an erroneous Conscience binds in the next words; *But to him that esteems any thing unclean, to him it is unclean.* Some things are Lawful, and not Necessary in doing or not doing these a Man sins not, if he follows the Directions of his Conscience, and observes the Rules of Charity. There are other things that are both lawful and necessary; and here, if a Man's Conscience mis-informs him, he sins either way by not doing them, because he obeys not the written Law of God; by doing them, because he follows not the Directions of that which God has appointed to be his immediate Guide. And when the Doctor says, *we ought to submit, and give a Preference to the lawful Authority of the Church, before our own private Perswasions;* he is greatly mistaken: I am never to do so in Matters of Sin and Duty; but am always to follow my own Perswasion; and if I mistake, it is not their Authority, but their Arguments and Reasons must make me submit; and to urge Men, as the Doctor does, has, in my Apprehension, no other tendency than to make them condemn Conscience, (the regard to which should always be sacred and inviolable) and take the ready way to contract the most deplorable Hardness of Heart.

And now I shall look back upon the Doctor's Gloss upon those words, *Heb. 13. 17. Submit your selves.* He says, *It is the same as if the Holy Penman had said thus, Tho it may sometimes happen, that the Rulers of the Church may enjoin such things as some Members of the Church may not like in their own Opinions, yet it is the Duty of all such Members of the Church, to submit their Judgments to the Judgments of their Rulers, and to comply with their Injunctions, by an actual and punctual Obedience.*

I suppose by these Words, *May not like in their own Opinions* he means, that they judge them to be sinful, for else it do's not reach our Case; and then, I say, this is most pernicious Doctrine. There is nothing more dangerous, than for Persons to enslave their Judgments and Opinions to the Dictates of any un-inspir'd Persons, whoever they be. Nay, let us put the Case a little lower, that a Person is doubtful about the thing enjoin'd that tho he is not fully convinc'd that 'tis a Sin, yet upon the account of many plausible Reasons and Objections, he is not fully satisfied of the Lawfulness of it, will the Doctor vouch for him, that he must then obey his Rulers, and say, that that Text *What is not of Faith is Sin,* is nothing to the purpose? Certainly

in this Case, a Man is to suspend his Obedience to it. Or again, suppose the Rulers of the Church enjoin any thing (in it self really) indifferent, of which yet a Person questions the Lawfulness, while, at the same time, he is fully satisfy'd, that the Power of Church-Rulers do's not extend to the imposing such things; is it not clear, that in this Case he is not to comply? The Doctor says, *such a Submission is absolutely necessary to preserve the Churches Peace.* And that I own to be true, just as an absolute Submission to all the lawless Commands of a Tyrant, is absolutely necessary to preserve the Peace of a Kingdom. Without such Submission; there can be no Peace in the Church, where the Rulers will assume such a Power; but when they keep within bounds, and only teach Men to observe what Christ has commanded, the Peace of the Church will not need such a Support.

Next the Doctor proceeds to our **Objections** that are not taken from Scripture.

Object. 9. You say then, that the Act of Toleration do's permit you to separate from our Communion, and therefore you may lawfully do it. The Doctor answers, *That 'tis not in the Power of an Act of Parliament, to make that to be no Sin, which God has made sinful.* And this I grant, but deny that God has made our Separation sinful: And as the Doctor refers to his Papers for a Proof, I refer to mine for an Answer. God has never made it sinful for every Church to choose its own Officers, and to order his Worship in the best way they can, according to the Rules of his Word. Nor has the Parliament made it sinful for us to do so, that is, it is now against no Command of either. 'Tis true, in the late Times of Persecution, there were Acts of Parliament which did forbid us to worship God according as we judg'd we ought; and the great Argument then urg'd, was Obedience to the Civil Magistrate; and when his Power in all things, not forbidden in Scripture, was cry'd up, and Submission to it press'd, under pain, not only of Fines, and Imprisonments, &c. but of Damnation. Blessed be God, this Argument from an Act of Parliament (with the many forcible ways of urging it upon us) is now at an end; and we do not hear much of it, and especially from the Doctor, who presses the same Obedience to Church-Rulers. Now when we alledge the Act of Toleration, 'tis upon two Accounts.

1. In answer to any Arguments that are fetch'd from such Acts; and to shew, that the Laws of Magistrates can't now (as formerly) be pretended.

2. We especially urge it upon this Account, because the National Church is perfectly a Creature of the States, which owes its being to Acts of Parliament, and therefore we can't see but the same Power that form'd it, may alter it; and the same Power that was suppos'd to lay an Obligation upon us, is able to take it

off. I would fain know whose Institution a National Church is owing to, and whether there could be any such thing without an Act of Parliament? It is the Parliament that obliges Persons, in such or such a District, to submit to the Bishop of any City in it. It is this that makes, divides, or unites Parishes; and therefore I take it for certain, that if any Obligation lies upon me to resort to the Parish-Church, or to join with those that are for a National Conformity in Ceremonies, it must be deduc'd ultimately from an Act of Parliament; and by Consequence, if they have a Power to oblige me to resort to such a place, or sort of Worship, as I was not bound to before, they have a Power to release me from that Obligation also. Now this is actually the Case, for the Act of Toleration has vacated those former Laws which commanded me to fall in with the National Church, and has left me to my Liberty of worshiping God in any way that I like better; and of choosing a Pastor for myself; and tho the Doctor thinks it only frees from Civil Penalties; others think, that so far as the Sanctions of Humane Laws cease, so far those Laws themselves do cease also; so that there is now no Act of Parliament that requires any Dissenter to conform to the Church of England.

Object. 10. Our manner of Divine Worship is not so pure as that observ'd in your Dissenting Conventicles. It was thus the Heathens stil'd the Assemblies of the Primitive Christians, *Conventicula*. And if the Doctor thinks he follows a good Example, we are not unwilling to undergo the like Reproaches with those noble Persons, upon the account of our Regard to the Institutions of our Lord; and if he takes Pleasure herein, and in the Name he would give us of Fanatical Papists, we envy him not his Pleasure, and shall not retaliate. Our Religion teaches us to count our selves happy in these things, and to esteem them our Honour.

The Doctor says, *this is a down-right Falshood, &c.* but that is discours'd elsewhere.

Well, but we have, you say, some things, which, tho they are not forbid, yet neither are they requir'd by the Scriptures, and therefore these might be let alone, especially since we do not read that the Apostles us'd any such things.

For the Weight of this Objection, I need only refer to what I say elsewhere. The Doctor answers by retorting it upon us, that we have likewise some things of the same nature, as *Pulpits*. I remember, the Doctor in his other Letter, produces a learn'd Argument for reading of Sermons, out of *Jeremy 36. 4, 5, 6.* That *Baruch* wrote from the Mouth of *Jeremiab* all the Words of the Lord. I think verily I may with more Reason, alledge in this Case, *Neb. 8. 3.* *And Ezra the Scribe stood upon a Pulpit of Wood, which they had made for the purpose.* But I insist not on it, for this comes within those Circumstances, which are in order to the Execution

Execution of God's Commands. Our joining in Publick Worship is commanded; in order to this, 'tis necessary that he that officiates should be heard; and for this end, as well as others, 'tis necessary that he should stand higher than the People. But in order to the Execution of which Command is the Cross in Baptism, the Surplice, &c. We think we can see a vast Difference in these things; if the Doctor will not, we can't help it: But only query, whether he be not led by *Fancy, Humour, Perverseness*, and such like Motives, which, from his own Experience, he very readily charges us with.

He asks, *Why it should be less pure to pray or preach in a Surplice, than in a Pulpit.* I answer, The one is convenient and useful, in order to the Execution of a Divine Command, and the other not; but is only grounded upon a Pretence of Decency, when there is no Decency in it.

Object. 11. Is about agreeing with the Papists; of which in my other Letter.

Object. 12. Another great Pretence for your Separation, is that of better edifying: But this is no more than a meer Pretence; for the word *Edifying*, do's denote in plain English, the same as building up, and is made use of, on Account of the Church of Christ being frequently compar'd in the Scriptures to a Building or House. Now this Building or Church of Christ, being but one, therefore, to be Edify'd, must denote in the strictest and true Sense, being made a Part of that one Building, or a Member of that one Church. And therefore 'tis impossible that any Teacher should edify you, who promotes a Separation, just as 'tis impossible to build up any House by taking the Stones, and other Materials thereof, and putting them into different Parcels, instead of uniting or putting them together, whereby alone they can be built up into an House.

I answer, 1. The Doctor takes that for granted, which my Charity will not suffer me readily to grant him, *viz.* That 'tis impossible that Christians, who from their differing Sentiments separate from one another, should both be in the one Catholick Church. My Charity will not suffer me to entertain such black Thoughts of the Case of all Conformists, as this Principle would (if allow'd) constrain me to.

'Tis to me no hard thing to imagine, that Men of different Communions, may yet both agree in the Faith, which is necessary in order to their being united to Christ, by virtue of which Union to him, as their Head, the whole Church is one. And nothing tends to beget more unworthy Thoughts of God, than to represent him, as oblig'd to reject and damn all those in this Nation, who separate from the Church of *England*, meerly from a fear of displeasing him, while at the same time they believe all the Doctrines, and obey all the Rules of the Gospel. I can't suffer such a disparaging Thought of God, and his Goodness, once to enter into my Mind: But I conclude, that as in every Nation, so

In every Party of Christians, he that fears God, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him.

And while the Doctor is so free in his Discourse of this Nature, he seems to me to be liable to a just Application of that Scripture, which he unjustly in another place applies to us. *Psal. 50. 21. Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thy self*; that is, he seems to think, God has no more Clemency and Mercy than himself. I have sometimes wonder'd, how Men of the Doctor's High Principles, can make their Notions consist, I mean the more favourable Opinions they entertain generally of the Papists, while they own theirs a true Church, and hold, that a Man may be sav'd in it, and yet deny Salvation to the poor Dissenters. And yet, if I mistake not, the Separation ought to be as wide between the Church of *Rome* and them, as between them and us: But let the Doctor think as he pleases, while we can approve our selves to God, we neither value nor fear Man's Judgment.

We are well satisfy'd we belong to that Church of which Christ is the Head, and are not mov'd by the narrowness of such a measure the Unity or Extent of Christ's Church by a pitiful Uniformity in Humane Ordinances.

And let the Doctor look to it, that he be not mistaken, least if he be, he should meet with the same measure in Judgment wherewith he now Judges us; and when Dissenters come to be acquitted, he should be judg'd out of his own Mouth, and according to his own unmerciful Principle.

2. We utterly disown the Charge and Guilt of the Separation and say, it wholly belongs to the Conformists, who either laid a Design of forcing us to Separate, (as appears by the Speeches of some, and the Practices of others in 1662.) or, who fell in with those that had such a Design. They have all either assum'd or submitted to such a Power as Christ has not left in his Church, and do insist upon such Terms of Communion, as *they* own are unnecessary, and as they know, *we* think unlawful.

3. As to the Doctor's Notion of Edifying, we know very well that it signifies building up, and do add farther, that 'tis us'd Metaphorically for improving Persons in Knowledge, Faith, Holiness, &c. And as the Church is one Spiritual House, so is every true Christian a Temple of the Holy Ghost, and therefore the Scripture speaks of Edifying particular Christians, such as were already actually made parts of that one Spiritual House, or Members of that one Church; to which purpose are these places of Scripture *Rom. 14. 19. & 15. 2. 1 Corin. 8. 1. & 14. 4, 17. 1 Thess. 5. 11. Ephes. 4. 29.*

Nay, this word is us'd so generally for Instructing and Teaching, that 'tis once us'd when it can have no possible Relation to the Unity of the Church at all; it being us'd in a bad Sense, *1 Cor. 8.*

10. Shall not the Conscience of him that is weak be emboldned (in the Greek 'tis *Edify'd*) to eat those things that are offer'd to Idols? In short, according to the general Sense of this word in the Scripture, a Man is Edified when he improves in Spiritual Knowledge in Faith, Love to God and Men, &c. And this being the greatest thing a Christian has to look after, he is bound to use those means he finds most conducive thereunto; and to dissuade him from this, is to put him upon doing the worst wrong to his own Soul: And a serious Christian will be able to discern whether the means he uses, Edifie him or no.

It will not signifie much to Dispute whether the Establish'd Worship, or that of the Dissenters is most Edifying; No doubt the Doctor thinks so of the Establish'd, as I do of the Dissenters Worship; and after all, *this* must be left to the Judgment of particular Christians.

I will only add, with Reference to what he says afterwards of the Devil's Delusions, that he that finds himself to become more acquainted with the Will of God, more inflam'd with Love to God, and more quickned to a zealous Care and Endeavour to obey God in all things, &c. by the Ministry he sits under on either side, may be assur'd that the Devil has no hand in this, but that that Ministry is truly edifying to him, by the Blessing of God upon it.

Obj. 13. *You can't but think your Teacher to be a true Minister of Christ, because he is a good Liver, and preaches the Truths of the Gospel.* There are more things than one or two that must evidence a Man a Minister of Christ. That these are two Necessary Qualifications, we are sure from *Tit. 1. 6, 9.*

I have in my other Letter consider'd the validity of the Mission of the Dissenting Ministers; and if that stand good, and they appear to have these and such like Qualifications, it will not be in the power of the Doctor to disannul their Ministry.

But, says the Doctor, *Then every good Liver is a true Minister of Christ,* (but he knows that is not made an Evidence alone) *and consequently you your self must be a true Minister in the same sense your Teacher is; Namely, as a good Liver signifies a good Moral Man, (viz. a good Moral Man, that believes in Christ, that loves God, and keeps his Commandments) but if by a good Liver be meant a good Christian, then neither you nor your Teacher can be allow'd to be such, forasmuch as you wilfully and industriously abet and promote what is most strictly forbidden by Christianity, I mean Division in the Church.*

We stand not to the Doctor's Allowances; what has he to do to Judge another's Servants, who stand or fall to their own Master? But the Doctor is like sooner, by his discovery of his want of Charity (the very Breath and Soul of Christianity, and vastly more essential to it than Obedience to Humane Ceremonies) to blast the Reputation of his own than of our Christianity. But far-

farther, where is the wilfulness we are charg'd with, who profess that 'tis out of a sense of Duty to God that we do as we do? Should think the Doctor do's rather *wilfully and industriously abate and promote Division*, while he professedly pleads against those things that might end it: And therefore let him think seriously of that Text, *Rom. 2. 1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O Man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self; for thou that judgest, dost the same things.*

As to the other Particular, *Preaching the Truths of the Gospel*, he says, *The Dissenting Teachers preach up some, and preach down other Truths, and encourage Division*, (but enough of that already) and that *this is the common way of Cheats, to put off their bad Wares, by putting some good among them.* And this is an Insinuation with which the Reputation of any Minister whatever may be blasted. There is no tolerable Plea the Doctor has for this his base Suggestion. We hope he will take our Word, that our only Motive is a Fear of God, and a Desire to keep his Commandments.

Pag. 1. The Doctor expects his Neighbour should take his word in the like Case, and we demand the same of him: As to his long Harangue that follows, it has nothing of Argument in it; let but the Reader put in the Conformist instead of the Dissenting Teachers, and suppose the Charge to be brought against them for the Separation, and he will see it will serve us as well as him.

Obj. 14. *Is taken from the bad Lives of some of our Ministers, as if they were for that Reason not the Ministers of Christ; the weakness of which Objection I might shew at large, by proving, that a Man may be a very bad Man, and yet a true Minister, particularly from the Instance of Judas; as also by retorting the Objection on your own Party; forasmuch as there are to be found among your Teachers, as bad Livers as among our Ministers.*

To which I answer; 1. That 'tis very true, that a bad Man may not discover himself by his Actions what he is, and so long Charity obliges me to judge well of him: And so he, who has all other Qualifications but that of true Holiness, so long as he do's not discover himself by his Actions to be wicked, is to be judg'd in Charity a Minister of Christ: But when he shews himself to be wicked, he is no longer to be acknowledg'd a good Man, and much less a Minister of Christ; and it is so far from being a Duty, that 'tis errant Folly to commit the Care of my Soul to him, who plainly Evidences that he takes no Care at all of his own.

2. The Case is widely different between the Dissenting-Congregations and the Parish-Churches; forasmuch as any Dissenting Congregation may at Pleasure free themselves from any wicked Minister, whereas it is quite otherwise in the Parish-Churches: And therefore sober Men of the Establish'd Communion have complain'd of it.

3. I own this is only an Objection in such places where the Ministers are bad Livers, but 'tis a good one if true, let them be which side they will: The People are oblig'd to separate from them. But as I delight not in Reproaches, I shall only add, that a bad Life is a more clear Evidence of a false Prophet, than what he talks of in the foregoing Page; I mean a Separation on the account of those things in Dispute.

Obj. 15. *You are (tho not in Communion, yet) in Charity with us: and as a Token of such your Charity, you do not scruple now and then as occasion requires) to come to our Publick Service. Neighbour, as this Practice of your Party, commonly call'd Occasional Conformity, is so far from justifying your Separation, or lessening your Crime therein, that on the contrary, it renders it most inexcusable; For by such Occasional Conformity you plainly own, that there is nothing in our Publick Service, but what you can joyn with us in, if you will, and therefore your not coming to our Publick Service constantly, must proceed from no better Motive than Wilfulness or Obstinacy, at least, not out of a conscientious Fear of sinning there-*

To which I answer, 1. That if the Doctor's uncharitable Principle were true, that in all Church-Divisions on one side or other, persons must be no Christians, his Argument would be good. But this is a Principle which he knows we deny, and which is indeed wide from the Truth: Tho we think the Blame of our Divisions lies entirely on the Conformists side, yet we dare not judge after this rate of our Brethren. And whatever the Doctor may think of our Charity herein, we doubt not but sober Men, who think freely, will own it a Vertue.

2. These Occasional Conformists do look upon themselves bound in Conscience to have their stated Communion with the Dissenting Ministers, notwithstanding their Charity. They think it very evident, that they have all the necessary Qualifications of the Ministers of Christ. And that they were very unjustly thrown out of their Places in 1662. and that when those Terms were impos'd, all Ministers ought to have refus'd them, and consequently that the Dissenting Ministers are the most rightful Pastors of the Church, to which all the Christians of this Nation are bound to join themselves: And if Ministers and People had both acted thus, as they ought to have done, there had been no separation at all. But then,

3. They think, that tho this be the true State of the Case, they are not bound to condemn or unchristian all those who think otherwise. They believe that sincere Christians, and true Ministers of Christ, might be of different Opinions, and therefore they do not see why they may not esteem them as Christians, and hold Communion with them as such upon occasion, tho in these

these Extra-essential things they judge them in the wrong; and think they are bound to a fixed ordinary Communion with the other side. And withall they say,

4. That they do not herein do any thing which they apprehend sinful according to the Scriptures, or that can be reasonably concluded such from their professed Principles.

5. There are many things in the National Establishment which have been generally confess'd by themselves to be amiss, and to need a Reformation. And such a Reformation was long call'd for by the Puritans, while they continu'd in the Church, and by the Dissenters since: But nothing of this nature can be obtain'd but such Motions have been always reject'd, and are professedly by many oppos'd; and therefore the Dissenters can't but look on themselves as bound to attempt that Reformation among themselves, which they can't expect in the Constitution.

6. 'Tis very possible, a Man may think it lawful to join in some Parts of the Establish'd Worship, and unlawful to join in others: he may think it lawful to take the Sacrament Kneeling, and yet unlawful to have his Child baptiz'd with the Sign of the Cross. And yet I suppose all will grant, that a Man's fix'd Communion should be where he judges he can without Sin have the free Use of both Sacraments. So that a Man's occasional Conformity in one Particular, can't reasonably be interpreted, an owning that *there is nothing in the Publick Service, but what he can join in, if he will.*

7. There is no Obligation that lies upon them to such a constant Communion as is urg'd by the Doctor. If Acts of Parliament did now (as they do not) require this of us, what Evidence can be given, that God has lodg'd Ecclesiastical Government in the Magistrate? No such thing can be infer'd from the New Testament, or from the Original Contract, the Foundation of all Civil Power. If the Power of a Convocation, to make Laws for the National Church, be urg'd, What Evidence is there, that Christ (who instituted no such kind of Church) ever appointed any such governing Power? What Evidence, that all Christian Churches who have a Power left them within themselves, are oblig'd to submit to the Decrees of such an unequal Representation? Or if fine, if the Command of the Bishop in whose Diocess I live, be urg'd, what Evidence can be given of my Obligation to acknowledge him for my Pastor or Bishop, whom the Prince shall appoint? Or what good Reason can there be, that I should look upon him as the Person whom I am to obey and submit to, as set over me by God to watch for my Soul, to whom I am a perfect Stranger, and like always, it may be, so to remain.

These things ought to be clear'd, and the Authority that obliges Persons to be of the Establish'd Communion, be made out.

by good Scripture-Evidence, which I am satisfy'd the Doctor has not yet done. It may perhaps be said, that by their own Practice, and by an Occasional Submission, these Persons do acknowledge the Authority that enjoins the Establish'd Worship, and therefore are bound to a constant joining with it. But the Answer to that is easy, for their Practice shews plainly, that they do not acknowledge any such Authority as is pretended, and their stated Dissent is an avowing the contrary. By their Occasional Communion therefore, they do testify their Charity in an Action which they do judge lawful; and by their more ordinary and fixed Communion with the Dissenters, they do protest against the imposing Power, which is so very pernicious and prejudicial to the Christian Religion in this Nation.

Next the Doctor proceeds to the other part of the Objection, of Dissenters *being in Charity*, tho not in constant Communion with the Conformists. And this he endeavours to answer, and the old Story of Obedience to Bishops Returns, which need not be again consider'd.

The Doctor will do well to answer another Objection; and that is, that he himself is not in Charity with the Dissenters. But he adds, *I must earnestly beg you, to allow your self due time for an impartial Examination of your own Heart, whether you may not possibly deceive your self, whilst you think you are in Charity with us.* This is not a very hard Question to determine. A Man may know whether he believes those that differ from him are good Christians, and whether he do's truly love all such. The Doctor openly professes that he has no such Charity as this for us: But I can assure him, that 'tis very possible for a Dissenter to be of this Disposition toward Church-men; and I make no doubt, but many Church-men (of a better Spirit than the Doctor) are of the same Disposition towards us.

He adds, *that there is too much Ground to suppose that you may possibly be thus deceiv'd, you your self must acknowledge, if you are not altogether ignorant, what manner of Charity your Presbyterian Brethren, in the Late great Rebellion between 1640, and 1660. shew'd to the Episcopal Party in this Kingdom.*

In answer to which, it ought to be consider'd, what was the behaviour of the Episcopal Party before 1640. 'Tis notorious with what a high hand they carry'd it toward us, they persecuted us with an implacable Malice, and were endeavouring to bring this Nation under the vilest Slavery, both Civil and Religious. And when the Nation became sensible of their Danger, and began to contend for the Civil Rights, it can't be wonder'd at, that those who were unjustly oppress'd, should take part with those who oppos'd the Oppressors. What was it they suffer'd from the Presbyterians, in comparison of what they suffer'd from them between 1662. and 1688? Were they incapable of Living,

meerly for their being Episcopal ? Or were there any Hardships put upon them, like those of the *Oxford 5 Mile Act* ? Had the Dissenters been only depriv'd of their Livings in 1662. Had they not been depriv'd of the most sacred Rights of Subjects, and been continually harra's'd, fin'd, imprison'd, and restrain'd upon, and that very much at the Instigation of the Clergy ; had they not endur'd such a Series of bitter Reproaches and Calumnies, built on many notorious Forgeries, the Doctor might with some face have mention'd these former Times. But since the Episcopal Party have so abundantly repaid them to the utmost, whatever Hardships they can pretend to have suffer'd at their Hands, in Modesty, he ought to have omitted this ; *Not to mention the extraordinary Charity shewn, at this very present, by your Brethren to the Episcopal Party, in a Kingdom not remote.* To which I answer, that this Reflection is more unreasonable than the former, in as much as the Barbarities us'd towards the Presbyterians in that Kingdom, did vastly exceed those which were suffer'd by their Brethren in *England*. The Thumkins, Boot, and open Murders without so much as a Form of Justice, practis'd in that Nation strike a Man at the very thought of them with Horrour : And what is it that the Episcopal Party suffer there, who are not depriv'd of Liberty of Conscience ? 'Tis too plain, that a Jacobite Design is at the bottom of that Noise and Clamour which has lately been made in this Nation about *Scotland* ; but as the B—— of S——m has clear'd this Matter in his Speech in the House of Lords, I shall content my self with setting down his Account of the Matter, taking it out of the Annals of Queen *Anne's* Reign for the Year 1705. p. 206. He said, " That as to the Scots Affairs, he was particularly acquainted with them, and therefore " would venture to speak with the more Assurance : That the " Scots Kirk's being establish'd without a Toleration, was an unfair Allegation ; for there needed no Law for Toleration " where there was no Law to inhibit. The Episcoparians were " not forbid to worship God their own way, being only excluded " from Livings ; and that there were at that time fourteen Episcopal Meeting-houses in *Edinburgh* as open as the Churches, and " as freely resorted to ; in several of which the English Liturgy " was us'd ; but, that in several of them the Queen was not " pray'd for. And the Bill for giving Patrons Liberty of conferring their Benefices on Clerks Episcopally Ordain'd, had pass'd " (at least the King had allow'd it) if they would have put in " Clause to oblige them to take the Oath to the Government " but upon the offering that Clause, the Person that solicited " let it drop.

Obj. 16. *You mean well, and would fain do the best :* He answer'd *Any Papist, or any other misguided Person will say the same :* And may not I say the same to any Church-man that pretends to this, as
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suppose they do : And if the Doctor thinks this is our last Refuge, and that we are forc'd to flee to this when all our other Arguments are answer'd, he is much mistaken ; We need no such shift as this, nor is this any Objection of our making, but a Fancy of the Doctor's, which he thought would serve handsomly to bring up the Rear of his vain Triumph. Where Men make such a Profession (as all honest Men must be suppos'd to do it on both sides) and do not plainly contradict it, they are to be believ'd, and that should cause contending Parties to have more Charity than what the Doctor expresses in the next words, *viz. And you must remember, that tho God will undoubtedly make Allowances for Uprightness of Intention, where use has been made of all due means prescrib'd by God for understanding the Truth, yet this can't be look'd upon to be your Case, who refuse to make use of the Ordinary Means appointed by God for your Instruction ; because you refuse to be guided by your Parish-Minister, whom God has appointed to guide you in all Points of Difficulty.*

But, 1. How do's it appear that God has appointed the Parish-Minister to be my Guide ?

2. Who is to be Judge, which are Points of Difficulty ? Must I take the Parish-Minister's Word for that as well as for the Resolution ? What can the Papists desire more ? Suppose a Man should have Recourse to the Doctor, (as his Parish-Minister)

to his Writings, which the Doctor thinks better, *Pag. 43.* and consults him upon the Point of Conformity, and having consider'd his Reasons, finds them weak and trifling; must be guided by him, in spite of his own Judgment, that he is in the wrong ?

The Doctor mistakes, when he goes about to persuade the Dissenters to an implicit Faith, and blind Obedience; they are very much dispos'd to see with their own Eyes, and to believe no Doctrine any further than they see the Proof of it, and to own no Authority without some good Reason to convince them of the Rightfulness of it. And as to the Sincerity of our Intentions, we inform the Doctor that he would leave that to God to judge of ; 'tis a nice Point, and requires a more discerning, calm, and impartial Judgment to search into it than the Doctor is Master of : Let us remember that he is a fallible Creature, liable to mistake in judging, and therefore let him beware of rash judging the Secrets of Men, and their Eternal States. For tho an unrighteous Judgment makes no Alteration in the Case of those who are judg'd, the Consequence of it (being so desperately mischievous to Persons themselves, who take upon them to judge and condemn their Neighbours) should be more awfully thought of by the Doctor than it seems to be.

God forbid I should judge any Man, who professes to believe, do all that is requir'd in order to Salvation, and do's not contradict his Profession by a wicked Life. Such a Man, let him be

Presbyterian Independent, Episcopal, or Anabaptist, shall be sincerely Lov'd and Honour'd by me, and with all such I always profess a readiness to hold Communion, so it may be done with the Omission of doubtful Disputations.

I have now gone over his Objections, except those that are peculiar to himself, and of them, and his Conclusion, I shall not need to speak, because they do not at all affect the Cause of the Dissenters.

I shall only take a view of his Postscript, where there is no want of Malice and bitter Zeal, but the Doctor is so kind as to qualify it with an Antidote that will prevent our receiving any hurt by it, I mean the superabundant Silliness and Weakness of it.

1. Then he gives us a Specimen of the Disagreement between the Dissenters Principles and Practices.

I have spoken to the two first of his Instances in my other Letter; His 3d Instance is, That it is the Dissenters Principle, *that kneeling at the Sacrament is not to be allow'd of, as being Popish and Superstitious*; and for their Practice he tells us, *that the Dissenter do, notwithstanding, kneel at the Sacrament, in order to qualify themselves for Places or Offices*: Than which nothing can be more Ridiculous. How easie were it to retort this on the Church-men by comparing one Church-man with another, or the same Men with themselves; namely, their Principles about Obedience to the Prince, and their Practice directly opposite to it.

But I ask whether this Learned Doctor do's not know that the Dissenters are not all of one Mind in this Matter? Or, do he know that the same Men hold that Principle, and yet act in direct Opposition to it? He knows, all those that receive the Sacrament kneeling, do say, they do not judge it unlawful so to do; and the other sort of Dissenters, who think kneeling at the Sacrament Unlawful, are such as never Communicate with the Church. The Gentlemen in the House of Commons, who contended so earnestly for the Occasional Bill, yet took notice of this; and it might seem strange the Doctor should over-look were it not that he shews himself resolv'd to venture at anything, so he may but reproach and villifie the Dissenters.

In his 4th Instance, he sets down this as our Principle, *'Tis superstitious and Popish to adorn Churches, or make them Fine and Beautiful*: And our Practice he represents, *that several Meeting-Houses of the Dissenters, of late Years Erected, are, notwithstanding, built more Stately and Fine, than most of our Parish-Churches*. I am a perfect Stranger to this Principle of the Dissenters, which the Doctor talks of, as may be seen by a Passage in my former Letter wrote before I read this. The Dissenters do indeed judge unlawful to adorn places of Worship with Pictures and Crucifixes, and I suppose the Doctor can't charge them with any thing like this: But as to the height of the Building, it is certainly a v

at Convenience and Advantage to the People, who meet in upon more accounts than one : And I know none who think 'tis Superstitious or Popish to have the place of Worship decent and Handsome, tho' they judge, that where the Circumstances of a People will not reach to what is desirable; they may nevertheless acceptably worship God. And herein the Confor- its must be suppos'd to agree with them : For as they have their Stately Cathedrals, so they have some Parish-Churches which are sufficiently Mean, and which being only Thatch'd, might in Reason check the Humour of some People, that despise the Dissenters Worship upon that account. But if this be the principle of any Dissenters, I will freely disown it, and declare, I am so far from it, that I wish the Dissenters had as Fine and beautiful Places of Worship in every Town in *England*, as those the Doctor speaks of, which have been Erected of late Years.

His other Instance I have spoken of before.

2. Next he gives us a Specimen of *the Agreement between some Principles and Practices of the Dissenters and Papists.*

1. *The Papists make it their Business to seduce and draw off the People from the Communion of the Church of England. The Dissenters make it their Business to do the very same.*

This is admirably Profound ! The Papists would draw Men one way, and the Dissenters would draw them quite the contrary, and therefore there must be a marvellous Consent and Agreement between them : All Parties think themselves in the Right ; and like to have others of their Mind. But I would ask the Doctor whether he do's not think, that the Papists are as willing to seduce Persons from the Communion of the Dissenters, and whether there be not therefore as perfect an Agreement in this Matter between them and the Church of *England* ? And how easily could I run the Parallel as far as the Doctor has done, if Fond of writing such silly Postscripts. The Papists and the Church-men agree in seducing Men, and drawing them from the Dissenters to Diocesan Episcopacy, to Forms of Prayer, to bowing toward the Altar, and at the Name of Jesus, to kneeling at the Sacrament, and the use of the Cross in Baptism ; and the Papists use some of the same Methods with the Doctor ; Urge an implicit Faith in Church-Guides, endeavour to fright People into their Communion, by impudently damning all those that separate from them, &c.

His 2d, 3d and 4th Instances I have already consider'd.

5. *The Papists pretend to Miracles, and Extraordinary Gifts, and that their chief Guide, the Pope, is inspir'd, or more immediately assisted and directed by the Spirit. The Dissenters likewise pretend, that their Teachers are more spiritually Gifted than our Episcopal Clergy, and that their Guides are (many, if not all of them) inspir'd, or more immediately assisted and directed by the Spirit.*

Poor

Poor trifling ! The Papists pretend to Miracles and extraordinary Gifts ; Do the Dissenters pretend to any such thing ? What are the Miracles they boast of ? Do's the Doctor think the Assistance of God's Spirit a thing extraordinary in the Christian Church ? Is it not what every sincere Christian certainly has ? Is it not sure, that if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of Christ's ? *Rom. 8. 9.* The Dissenters do indeed Pray for the Assistance of the Spirit, and hope they enjoy a Measure of it, according to the Assurance which Christ has given us, *That our Heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to those that ask him, Luke 11. 13.* And they have the Charity to think this is not peculiar to themselves. The Papists indeed do pretend that the Pope is inspir'd, or more immediately assisted and directed by the Spirit : But do they not pretend that he is render'd hereby infallible ? Did they only pretend to his being immediately assisted as other Christians are, (who may notwithstanding err) who would deny it, supposing he appear'd to be a good Christian ? But why do's the Doctor say the Dissenters pretend their Guides are inspir'd ? Is that a word which they ever apply to themselves ? Or do they pretend to that Infallibility which Inspiration (in the common Sense of the Word) do's carry along with it ? Do they pretend to impose any thing they say upon the People on this score ? Do they not openly declare and avow to their Hearers, that they are no farther to be believ'd, than as what they say is contain'd in the Scripture, or by just Consequence deduc'd from it ? If Inspiration be taken only in a Lax Sense, for the Assistance of the Spirit, the Dissenters know that the Churchmen pretend to it as well as themselves. I would fain else understand the 13th Article ; " Works done before the Grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God. Or the Collect for the 5th Sunday after *Easter* ; " O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us, they humble Servants, that by thy holy Inspiration we may think those things " that be good, &c.

Or if the Doctor pretends to nothing of this, I would fain know how he could answer the Question propounded to him when he was made a Deacon ? When the Bishop ask'd him, Do you trust that you are *inwardly mov'd by the Holy Ghost*, to take upon you this Office ? How could he answer, *I trust so* ? I know no Dissenters that carry the Matter higher than this. It follows,

Whence arises N. B. one remarkable Difference between the Dissenters and Papists. The Papists acknowledge but one (viz. the chief) of their Spiritual Guides to be inspir'd, or more immediately assisted and directed by the Spirit, and him they call the Pope. The Dissenters pretend that many (if not all) of their Spiritual Guides are inspir'd, or more immediately assisted and directed by the Spirit, and so have among them many Popes.

Does the Doctor believe what he says to be true? If he does, he ought to understand our Opinion better, before he writes against us, and not rashly charge us with what we positively deny, in the same Sense that the Church-men do. For I doubt not but they will own, that notwithstanding God gives his Spirit to Christians in general, yet there are some special Promises of Christ's Presence made to Ministers, upon which they may depend, not only in that Work which is common to them and other Christians, but in that which is peculiarly theirs, I mean the Discharge of the Ministerial Function. And therefore it is too plain, the Doctor has here taken part with the great Accuser.

I can't but commend to the Doctor this Caution, as a Friend, that he would beware of bantering about the Work of the Spirit: 'Tis too serious a Matter to be thus ridicul'd: And I am fully perswaded, that the Neglect of this Caution will never be of Service to his Cause. For they who know how necessary the Assistance of the Spirit is, and make this the matter of their earnest and daily Prayer to God, will be very apt to suspect (in spite of all his Arguments) that he that can turn the Assistance of God's Spirit into a Banter, does some way or other quench the Spirit.

Since it thus appears from the foregoing Specimen, that all the Adversaries of the Church of England promote the same common End, viz. Popery, and that by many the same common Artifices; ought therefore to be duly consider'd, whether they may not all be very properly comprehended under the general Name of Papists? and to be sub-distinguish'd into Roman Catholick Papists on the one hand; and on the other hand, into fanatical Papists, otherwise call'd Dissenters.

I would fain know of the Doctor, why he is offended with the Dissenters, when they accuse the Conformists as symbolizing with the Papists, and yet is so free to brand them as Papists? And what distinctive Point of Popery do they maintain? I cannot think of one thing, wherein the Conformists differ from the Papists, wherein the Dissenters do not differ from them also; and there are some things more, wherein they differ from them both. So that they must be reputed and nam'd Papists, not because they are less, but more opposite and contrary to the Papists than some of their Neighbours: So that to imitate the Doctor in his way of Discourse

in other Places; the reason why we must be call'd *Papists*, is, because we are not *Papists*. P. 40. & p. 38. Of his other And his Addition of *Fanatical*, is as absurd and ridiculous as the other. We own Letter.

not one Notion about the Influence of the Spirit, which we are

not

not able to confirm by the Articles, Liturgy, &c. of the Church of England, as well as by the Scriptures.

As a Farewell, the Doctor tells us, *That we are taking the right and most ready way to bring in Popery.*

In answer to which I say, 1. That we are very sensible that our Divisions are an Advantage to the Papists, who would otherwise never have been so zealous to divide us, or made use of such Tools to screw Matters to the utmost height in 1662 in order to the dividing of us. They knew for certain, that such Terms being impos'd, there must of necessity a Division ensue, and Popish Counsels were at the bottom of all the Severities us'd against us. And it will be to the perpetual Reproach of those that were concern'd in those Affairs in 1662 that they did (for ought appears) wilfully and industriously cause a Division, which any one might see, could serve no other than a Popish Interest.

2. 'Tis too plain who are now most serviceable to the Popish Cause, even those who are united in Counsels with them, the Jacobites and High Church-men actually are; and that in Opposition to the Dissenters and Moderate Church-men. And there is evidently more Danger from the Opposition of the High-Church against the Moderate Church-men, than from any Disagreement between them and the Dissenters: And it is the Union of these two that has kept out Popery, which had otherwise overflow'd this Nation.

3. 'Tis in the Power of the Church to end the Division (or a great measure at least) and so to remove the Danger that arises from it. Or it is rather in the Power of the Parliament, to remove those things that keep the Breach wide open; but the loud Noise, and empty Clamour of the High Part of the Clergy, hinder it. So that whatever the Advantage be which the Papists gain by our Divisions, it is wholly chargeable on the Conformists side. For,

4. We are not able on our side to end the Division. We are heartily sorry, not only that the Papists may reap Advantage hereby, but for many other Mischiefs that are owing to the same Cause. But we cannot part with our Consciences to keep out Popery; nor must we do Evil, that Good may come of it.

And thus, Sir, I have consider'd the Doctor's Arguments against us, which I am well satisfy'd, are not like to do us hurt, the Mischiefs, which from his own Uncharitableness (without Repentance) is like to accrue to himself. That God would therefore give him true Repentance, shall be sincerely my Prayer for him; and therein, I doubt not, your Religion and Inclination will engage you to join with,

SIR, Yours, &c.



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